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FIFTH UNITED NATIONS REGIONAL
CARTOGRAPHIC CONFERENCE FOR
THE AMERICAS
New York, 11-15 January 1993
Agenda item 9

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE

Draft report

Chapter I

ORGANIZATION OF THE CONFERENCE

A. Terms of reference

1. The Fifth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas, convened in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1989/116 of 22 May 1989, was held at United Nations Headquarters from 11 to 15 January 1993.

B. Opening of the Conference

2. On behalf of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Development, Mr. William Seltzer, Director of the Statistical Division, welcomed the participants and noted the support of so many Governments, not only from the region but also from other parts of the world. After reviewing the activities of the Department since the Fourth Conference, he stated that the Conference was taking place in a rapidly evolving international context in which global partnership had succeeded the cold war era.

3. He noted that a new integrated approach was emerging in the consideration of developmental, social and environmental issues. Such issues as population growth, poverty alleviation, employment and human resources development, and national capacity-building should now be addressed in a comprehensive and cohesive manner.

4. The Executive Secretary of the Conference, Mr. Ousmane Gueye, thanked the Under-Secretary-General for his opening address and added his welcome.

C. Attendance

5. The Conference was attended by 100 representatives or observers from 35 countries, 3 specialized agencies and 7 intergovernmental and international scientific organizations. The list of participants appears as annex I to the present report.

D. Agenda

6. The Conference adopted its agenda as contained in document E/CONF.86/1. The agenda as adopted appears as annex II to the present report.

E. Adoption of the rules of procedure

7. At its 1st plenary meeting, the Conference adopted its rules of procedure as contained in document E/CONF.86/2. The rules of procedure as adopted appear as annex III to the present report.

F. Election of officers

8. The Conference elected the following officers:

President: Myriam Ardila (Colombia)

First Vice-President: Gaspar Reza Maqueo (Mexico)

Second Vice-President: Carol Beaver (United States of America)

Rapporteur: Kim Lochhead (Canada)

G. Organization of work

9. The Conference adopted the organization of work as proposed by the Secretariat.

H. Credentials of representatives to the Conference

10. The Credentials Committee, composed of the President, the two Vice-Presidents and the Rapporteur, with the Executive Secretary ex officio, reported that the credentials of all representatives had been found to be in order.

I. Establishment of technical committees

11. The Conference established three technical committees, for which the following officers were elected:

Committee I: Cartographic data acquisition
(Agenda items 5 (b), (c), (d), (e) and (g))

Chairman: Francis Charles (Trinidad and Tobago)

Rapporteur: Ricardo Montaner (Chile)

Committee II: Cartographic data manipulation
(Agenda items 5 (j), (k) and (l))

Chairman: D. R. F. Taylor (International Cartographic Association)

Rapporteur: Denis Genest (Canada)

Committee III: Cartographic data storage and presentation
(Agenda items 5 (a), (f), (h), (i) and (m))

Chairman: Rene Gonzalez (Guatemala)

Rapporteur: Susana Arciniegas (Ecuador)

The Conference decided not to nominate Vice-Chairmen for technical committees.

Chapter II

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE PLENARY MEETINGS

Agenda items 1-4

12. The Conference considered in plenary meeting agenda items 1 to 4, 6, 7 and 8.

Country reports

13. Under agenda item 4, 11 documents were presented on country reports (E/CONF.86/WP.1, WP.20, WP.21, WP.24, WP.28, WP.29, WP.30, WP.31, WP.32, WP.33 and WP.36).

14. The representative of Brunei Darussalam presented his country's report (E/CONF.86/WP.1). Activities reported related to map production, map production on request, town and village tourist maps, geodetic surveys, digital mapping, national house numbering project and LIS/GIS developments. On a question from Mexico regarding the status of the conversion of conventional maps to digital form, the representative of Brunei Darussalam stated that this work might be contracted for a completion date of 1996.

15. The United States of America presented its national report (E/CONF.86/WP.20). Since the Fourth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas, United States cartographic activities included further advances in computer technology application to mapping, remote sensing, geographic information systems and inertial and satellite positioning systems.

16. The report described activities in the following eight subject areas: Geodesy, Image mapping, Topographic mapping, Hydrography and oceanography, Aeronautical charting, Geographic names, Digital cartography and Global change.

17. The report also gave a detailed description of the activities of the following agencies which produced various maps: the United States Geological Survey, the United States Department of the Interior, the United States National Ocean Service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Defense Mapping Agency of the Department of Defense.

18. The representative of Spain presented his country's report entitled "Informe general" (E/CONF.86/WP.21). Areas discussed include: geodetic activities, topographic mapping, national GIS development, digital terrain models and national Spanish atlas. Spain has emphasized public and private sectors cooperation in surveying and mapping projects. On a question asked by Mexico regarding user interest in digital data, the representative of Spain indicated that there was already an evident interest from users and that it was expected that this demand would grow.

19. The representative of Germany presented his country's report (E/CONF.86/WP.28). The report concentrated on re-establishing the geodetic reference system in the eastern region of the reunified Germany, as well as the development of cadastral system for that region, which was under way. Gravity surveys would also be carried out. He emphasized the need for a unified reference system for all these cartographic activities. International projects in various South American countries and Antarctica were mentioned.

20. The sixth paper submitted under agenda 4 was the report on Oman (E/CONF.86/WP.29). The country's National Survey Authority was founded in 1985 to improve geodetic and topographical survey data, provide contractual and quality control between mapping contractors and ministries, act as custodian for all maps and geographical data, and operate all security aspects of mapping and aerial photography within the Sultanate.

21. Following the recent publication by the National Survey Authority of a four-sheet map of Greater Muscat - the capital, the Authority now intended to produce high-quality mapping of other urban areas using its own resources. For the past several years, all mapping had been produced in both hard copy and digital format.

22. Activities had also commenced recently on the development of a national geographic information system. A pilot scheme was currently under way to test data conversion and further refine and develop a full geographic information system specification at appropriate scales.

23. Argentina presented a paper (E/CONF.86/WP.30) entitled "Introducción al informe nacional presentado por el servicio de hydrografia naval". The Government was currently mapping the country's coastline, as well as that of Antarctica. The goal was to obtain greater knowledge about the sea and its subsoil, and to provide the navy and shipping interests with more information about the coastline. The Navy Hydrographical Service was engaged in updating symbols and place names.

24. The Military Geographical Institute drew up maps for the overall Republic of Argentina, surrounding islands, and Antarctica. Those maps were developed on scales of 1:50,000, and 1:250,000. Studies were also under way on the environmental impacts on Antarctica. The Institute planned to cover Argentina's portion of the Antarctica with a satellite observation network.

25. The representative of China introduced his country's report (E/CONF.86/WP.31) entitled "Development of surveying and mapping in the People's Republic of China", which had been prepared by the National Bureau of Surveying and Mapping and which dealt with the development of surveying and mapping in China between 1989 and 1992.

26. Since the Fourth Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas, there had been great progress in China in the areas of surveying and mapping. Priority had been placed on the completion of a 1:10,000-scale topographic mapping and on mapping for land resources investigation. Among the important surveying and mapping projects completed were the national second-order levelling network, the national first-order gravity network and the 1:1,000,000-scale national topographic information system.

27. The representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland introduced his country's report on cartographic activities of the United Kingdom in the region of the Americas (E/CONF.86/WP.32). The report contained an account of the contributions that had been made by government agencies of the United Kingdom since the Fourth Conference to the surveying, mapping and charting of the countries and seas of the Americas. According to the report, the main contributions to cartographic activities in the Americas had been made by such agencies as OS International (the Overseas Surveys Directorate had been renamed OS International in April 1991) and the Defence Ministry's Military Survey and Hydrographic Office.

28. OS International had undertaken mapping and surveying projects in 13 countries in the region often as part of the United Kingdom's aid programme. The Military Survey's activities had been concentrated on its North American training areas and Belize. The Hydrographic Office had continued its work of updating the Admiralty Charts in those parts of the region for which it was responsible, and the Royal Navy had completed a number of surveys in the Caribbean and West Indies.

29. Topographic surveying and mapping projects had been undertaken in collaboration with local survey departments in the following countries of the region: Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica,

Falkland Islands (Malvinas), Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

30. The report of Panama, "Informe tecnico de las actividad cartograficas en Panama" (E/CONF.86/WP.33), was presented by the country's representative, who said that in the past four years activities in cartography had developed notably in Panama, resulting in increases in map production and the introduction of new technologies. The trend was towards developing a geographic information system that would not abandon traditional techniques.

31. For one year, Panama had used global positioning systems for its cartography. Topographic maps at a scale of 1:50,000 had been developed using "spot images". LANDSAT images were being employed in surveys to cover marsh and forest areas.

32. The fourth consecutive edition of the national atlas of Panama was about to be produced. Panama was developing a national digitally based cartographic database for research and planning for various projects.

33. In the area of hydrography, a new survey was planned which would employ the GPS Pathfinder system. Panama had hosted the nineteenth Central American Cartographic Week, which brought together Central American institutes to present and compare their programmes.

34. The country report of Romania entitled "Overview and future trends in cartography in Romania" (E/CONF.86/WP.36) was presented by the country's representative who gave a brief history of cartography in Romania. Activities such as astronomy, triangulation, levelling and satellite geodesy were discussed in the report. Topographic mapping activities, photogrammetry and remote sensing were also discussed. A trends and needs section of the report outlined various technologies (e.g. GIS, computer hardware/software, GPS) being considered or developed for use in Romania. The "reference" section of the report documented papers published by Romania in recent years.